

**Edwin 'Bud' Shrake, 77**

## **Novelist Was a Texas Fixture**

By Joe Holley  
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Edwin "Bud" Shrake, 77, a Texas novelist, former Sports Illustrated associate editor and co-author of one of the best-selling books about golf, "Harvey Penick's Little Red Book," died of lung cancer May 8 at St. David's Medical Center in Austin.

In the early 1990s, Texans who weren't golfers or readers of Mr. Shrake's work may have known him as the tall, gray-haired "Prince Philip" to their gregarious governor, Ann Richards. The divorced governor and her escort, the self-proclaimed "first guy," were longtime friends.

Mr. Shrake got his start in journalism in 1951 as the police reporter for a scrappy tabloid called the Fort Worth Press. Gary Cartwright, his longtime friend and between-marriages roommate, was covering the same beat for the mainstream Fort Worth Star-Telegram and recalled that the two of them usually could be found hanging out at a bar across the street from the police station. A copy boy monitoring police calls would alert them to stories.

In the 1960s and '70s, Mr. Shrake was part of a ragtag assemblage of Texas writers known collectively as "Mad Dog Inc." Hard-drinking good ol' boys and anti-establishment liberals, they included Cartwright, who would go on to write for Texas Monthly; novelist Billy Lee Brammer ("The Gay Place"); sportswriter Dan Jenkins ("Semi-Tough"); Larry L. King ("The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas"); and Peter Gent, the Dallas Cowboys wide receiver who wrote the novel "North Dallas Forty."

"Shrake has always been an intriguing talent, far superior to his drinking buddies," novelist Larry McMurtry wrote in a controversial 1981 Texas Observer essay assessing the state's writers.

Of Shrake's 10 novels -- he was working on No. 11 at the time of his death -- at least two stand out: "Blessed McGill" (1967), a Reconstruction-era Western, and "Strange Peaches" (1972), a novel of Dallas at the time of the Kennedy assassination. Mr. Shrake was working for the Dallas Morning News when the assassination occurred and dating Jada, a star stripper at Jack Ruby's Carousel Club.

When anybody asks me what Dallas was like during the time of the Kennedy assassination, I always refer them to 'Strange Peaches,' " said Don Graham, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin who writes frequently about Texas literature.

Mr. Shrake also was a screenwriter. His credits include "J.W. Coop" (1971), starring Cliff Robertson; "Kid Blue" (1973), starring Dennis Hopper; and "Tom Horn" (1980), starring

Steve McQueen. As an "as told to" biographer, he wrote autobiographies of Willie Nelson and former Oklahoma football coach Barry Switzer.

The success of his collaboration with venerable Austin golf teacher Harvey Penick allowed Mr. Shrake to devote his time to writing novels. Penick, who taught Professional Golfers' Association veterans Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite, had been recording observations about the game in a red Scribbletex notebook since the 1930s. Although he considered his notebook a mere instructional aid, he confided its contents to Mr. Shrake. "Harvey Penick's Little Red Book: Lessons and Teachings From a Lifetime in Golf" (1999) remained on the New York Times bestseller list for 54 weeks.

Edwin Allen Shrake Jr. was born Sept. 6, 1931, in Fort Worth. He went to work for the Fort Worth Press while a student at Texas Christian University, where he received his undergraduate degree in English and philosophy. He joined the Dallas Times Herald as a sportswriter in 1958 and was hired by the Dallas Morning News in 1961 to write a daily sports column. He was with Sports Illustrated from 1964 to 1979.

He was twice married to and twice divorced from Joyce Shrake, with whom he had two sons, Ben Shrake of Fort Worth and Alan Shrake of Los Angeles. His marriage to Doatsy Shrake also ended in divorce. Survivors also include a brother; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Mr. Shrake and Richards remained companions until her death in 2006. "They were both very mysterious about it," Cartwright said, "and when you would ask them, they said, 'We intend to grow old together.' " Mr. Shrake will be buried beside the former governor in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin